

## Biological Assessment Seminar Information Guide

We would like to update you about the web site and the biological assessment qualification class and exam. The seminar materials are posted on the biology website: WSDOT Environmental Biology or <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/biology/default.htm>

Please review these materials before attending the seminar. We feel that having a good familiarity with these materials will help make the class more meaningful and productive. There are a number of topics that are new or have been extensively updated. Some of this material is rather complicated - such as calculating the extent of project-generated noise, and previous review will help you follow the discussions.

We will be providing participants with hole-punched hard-copies of all seminar materials. **Please bring:**

- A **3-inch three ring binder** to hold all course materials.

### Qualification requirements to write Biological Assessments for WSDOT

- To qualify as a **Senior Writer** you must pass the exam and have at least two years of BA writing experience, and a degree in biology or a related science. **Please bring** a copy of your resume stating the exact number of years you've written BAs, BA's you've written, where you earned your degree and what your degree is in.
- To qualify as a **Junior Writer** you must pass the exam and have a degree in biology or a related science. **Please bring** a copy of your resume stating the exact number of years you've written BAs, BA's you've written, where you earned your degree and what your degree is in.

Review of this material will also help prepare you for the qualification exam. The exam has been prepared and beta-tested. Feedback on the exam was that it was very challenging. So here is what you need to know about the exam.

The exam consists of approximately 190 multiple-choice or true-false questions. To pass the exam, biologists must score 80-percent or higher. The exam is comprehensive in its scope and will cover topics that are addressed in the two-day course in addition to information that is included in the manual only.

Topics covered in the exam include:

- Species information- identification (common names), habitat, sensitive periods, listing status, listing terminology - This is general, we don't expect you to know the run timing of every ESU or all the scientific names, but do know where you can find what.
- Biological Assessment (BA) writing process (as defined in the manual),
- Defining the action area,
- The Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process and the WSDOT consultation process,
- Making ESA effect determinations and appropriate effect determination language
- Familiarity with ESA sections relevant to section (7) consultation
- Familiarity with Magnuson Stevens Act consultation (what do you consult on and what are the appropriate effect determinations).
- Impact avoidance and minimization measures in BAs and Biological Opinions (BMPs, minimization measures, performance standards, conservation measures, conservation recommendations, etc),
- Critical habitat and primary constituent elements,
- Project-related noise analysis, terminology, and thresholds for injury and disturbance,

- Environmental Baseline Pathways and Indicators,
- Indirect effect analysis and terminology,
- Storm water analysis and terminology.

We strongly encourage biologists to review the materials before and during the seminar, as we will not be able to cover all information contained in the manual or on the test. We look forward to seeing you in the upcoming trainings.